

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

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R 161131Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2842

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 6577

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, VN, VS, CB, LA, US

SUBJ: THE ACCOMMODATION VIEW IN THAI FOREIGN POLICY

REF: BANGKOK 5946

1. THE REFTEL GIVES AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN CHOICES AVAILABLE TO THAI FOREIGN POLICY MAKERS AS THE INDOCHINA SITUATION CONTINUES TO UNRAVEL. THIS MESSAGE EXAMINES FURTHER SOME OF THE REASONING BEHIND AND DYNAMICS OF THE ACCOMMODATION VIEW OF THAI FOREIGN POLICY. THIS VIEW EMANATES FROM THAI DISCOURAGEMENT WITH THE TRENDS THEY PERCEIVE IN INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS COMPUED WITH THEIR GGATHERING REALIZATION THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT GOING TO DO MUCH TO SALVAGE THE SITUATION.

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2. IN A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION ON CURRENT INDOCHINA

PROBLEMS, UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PHAEN SANNA-METHI EXPRESSED TO THE CHARGE THAI DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE SITUATION IN LAOS AND THE FACT THAT THE PGNU APPEARS TO BE STALLING ON IMPLEMENTING THE CONCESSIONS THE THAI MADE DURING THE JANUARY BILATERAL BORDER COMMITTEE MEETING. PHAEN INFERRED FROM THIS PGNU INACTION A PATHET LAO UNWILLINGNESS TO SEE IMPROVED THAI-LAO RELATIONS, AND BY EXTENSION THE ASCENDANCY OF THE PL OVER THE VIENTIANE SIDE.

3. WHAT THE THAI SEE WITH INCREASING CLARITY IS THE POSSIBILITY OF A UNIFIED COMMUNIST-DOMINATED INDOCHINA. DESPITE THE DISCOURAGING PROSPECTS WITH WHICH THE THAI ARE PRESENTLY COMING TO GRIPS, THAI OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN BELIEVE THAT EVEN SHOULD THE COMMUNISTS SUCCEED IN BOTH CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM, THEY WOULD NOT NECESSARILY POSE AN IMMEDIATE MILITARY THREAT TO THAILAND. THE COMMUNISTS WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION TO EFFECT BEFORE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK OUTWARD ONCE AGAIN.

4. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE THAI NURTURE THE BELIEF THAT IF THEY DO NOTHING TO IMPLY AN ACTIVE ANTAGONISM TO A COMMUNIST INDOCHINA, THEY WILL NOT CAUSE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TO REVISE FORWARD DRV PRIORITIES OR UNDERMINING THAILAND AS A THREAT TO THE COMMUNIST POSITION. THE ACCOMMODATION VIEW WOULD, THEREFORE, URGE THE RTG TO TRY TO MAKE POLITICAL CONCESSIONS TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THAILAND AND THE COMMUNISTS CAN LIVE TOGETHER ON MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

5. COMMENT: THOUGH THE THAI HAVE YET TO MAKE HARD FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS, MUCH LESS TAKE ANY ACTION, REGARDING THE INDOCHINA SITUATION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE ACCOMMODATION OPTION IS BOTH MORE REALISTIC AND MORE LIKELY. AS WE DISCUSSED IN THE REFTEL, THAI EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THEIR MILITARY PREPAREDNESS, OR THAI INTEREST IN MAINTAINING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. AS A HEDGE AGAINST DRV PERFDY, DO NOT NECESSARILY RULE OUT ACCOMMODATION WITH NORTH VIETNAM. BUT ANY MEANINGFUL THAI APPROACH TO HANOI WILL PERFORCE INVOLVE A RADICAL ALTERATION IN THE U.S.

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MILITARY PRESENCE. THE THAI ATTITUDE ON THIS WILL DEPEND IN PART AS LEAST ON WHAT HANOI IS WILLING TO PAY TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES.
MASTERS

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